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Statement by the President of the Security Council

At the 4471st meeting of the Security Council, held on 7 February 2002, in connection with the Council's consideration of the item entitled "The situation in Burundi", the President of the Security Council made the following statement on behalf of the Council:

"The Security Council pays tribute to the signatories to the Arusha Agreement, and the transitional president, His Excellency Mr. Pierre Buyoya in particular, for their efforts to advance the peace process. It expresses its full support for the transitional government set up on the basis of the Agreement, which was represented by President Buyoya at the meetings of the Council on 5 February 2002. The Council reiterates its gratitude for the facilitation efforts of former President Mandela. It also expresses its support for the ongoing efforts of President Bongo and Deputy President Zuma, as well as States in the region and South Africa to facilitate the implementation of the Arusha Agreement.

"The Council reaffirms that continued fighting against the legitimate transitional government set up pursuant to an inclusive peace agreement is totally unjustifiable and unacceptable, and threatens the implementation of the peace process. It once more calls on the rebel groups immediately to lay down arms in the interest of all Burundians and recalls that only a negotiated solution will finally end the fighting. In this connection, the Council commends the commitment of the transitional government to enter into ceasefire negotiations and pays tribute to the efforts made to that end by the facilitation team and, in coordination with the latter, by the States in the region, particularly United Republic of Tanzania. The Council emphasizes that it is now up to the rebel groups to do their part. It calls on them immediately to translate into action the encouraging signals that they have given recently. It emphasizes further that, while the transition is moving ahead according to the established time frame, time is of the essence for the rebels finally to join the peace process.

"The Security Council welcomes the steps taken by the Governments of Burundi and the Democratic Republic of the Congo to normalize their relations. In this regard, it also welcomes the joint communiqué they issued on 7 January (S/2002/36). It calls on them to implement as soon as possible the elements agreed in this communiqué, and in particular to ensure that the territory of the Democratic Republic of the Congo will not be used for armed

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attacks against Burundi, and to proceed to the effective withdrawal of Burundian troops from Congolese territory.

"The Security Council emphasizes that national reconstruction and economic recovery are the other main challenges which the Burundi peace process must overcome in order to place itself on a stronger footing. The Council stresses the important role of the international community in this regard and calls on donor countries to honour as soon as possible the pledges which they made at the Paris (December 2000) and Geneva (December 2001) donor round tables, as well as on the United Nations system as a whole to support the transitional government for the reconstruction of the country."